

A¹ A multibeam scanning optical apparatus having a light source, an optical deflector, a scanning optical system, a detection optical element, and a photodetector. A plurality of light beams modulated in accordance with information signals are emitted from the light source and lead to the optical deflector. The light beams deflected by the optical deflector are then focussed on a surface to be scanned, typically a photosensitive drum, by way of the scanning optical system having an $f\theta$ characteristic. Part of the deflected light beams are lead to the photodetector by a way of the detection optical system in order to control the timing of the start of scanning so that the centers of the scanning areas of the plurality of light beams agree with each other on the surface to be scanned.